

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER



May 1, 2015

Ms. Nancy Witherell
Regional Historic Preservation Officer
U.S. General Services Administration
National Capital Region
Office of Planning & Design Quality
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20407-0001

RE: Proposed Installation of Building Identification and Wayfinding Signs at Ten Federal Buildings

Dear Ms. Witherell:

Thank you for consulting with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) regarding the above-referenced undertakings. We have reviewed the project submittal and are writing to provide our comments regarding effects on historic properties in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR Part 800. The names, addresses and associated SHPO log numbers for the subject buildings are as follows:

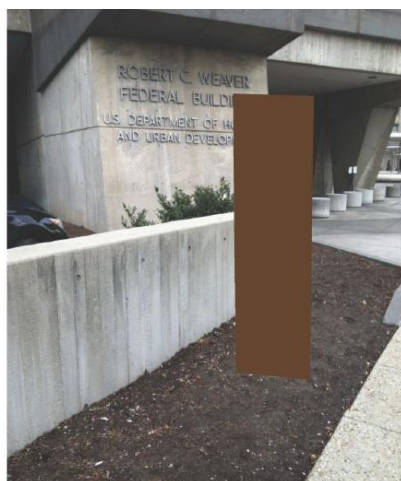
1. Hubert H. Humphrey (Health and Human Services) Building; 200 Independence Avenue, SW (15-0229)
2. Wilbur Cohen (Social Security) Building; 330 Independence Avenue, SW (15-0230)
3. E. Barrett Prettyman Courthouse; 333 Constitution Avenue, NW (15-0231)
4. William Bryant Annex; 333 Constitution Avenue, NW (15-0232)
5. Winder (Office of U.S. Trade Representative) Building; 600 17th Street, NW (15-0233)
6. Lafayette (Veterans Affairs) Building; 811 Vermont Avenue, NW (15-0234)
7. Robert C. Weaver (HUD) Building; 451 7th Street, SW (15-0235)
8. Veterans Affairs Building; 810 Vermont Avenue, NW (15-0236)
9. Lyndon B. Johnson (Dept. of Education) Building; 400 Maryland Avenue, SW (15-0237)
10. J. Edgar Hoover (FBI) Building; 935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW (15-0238)

As indicated in your letter, the majority of the subject buildings are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and all of them are located adjacent to streets and/or reservations which contribute to the significance of the National Register-listed Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant Plan). For these reasons, the proposed signs do have the potential to affect historic properties. Since the signs will be of the same type and design we previously determined would not adversely affect other historic Federal buildings in the Monumental Core, however, we concur with GSA's finding that the undertakings will have "no adverse effect" on historic properties, including archaeological resources. On the other hand, we request GSA to consider the following comments in the interest avoiding the "visual clutter" that can result from excessive signage:

Winder Building – two signs along 17th Street do not appear to be necessary given the relatively narrow width of the building's eastern elevation and the fact that a bronze panel sign which reads "The Winder Building" already exists near the front entrance. We recommend that either Sign #1 of 3 (at the building's NE corner) or Sign #2 of 3 (near the building's SE corner) be eliminated or that both be consolidated into one, intermediate new location.



Weaver Building – given the existing building signage which is clearly visible in the first image below, Sign #2 of 2 appears redundant and unnecessary. The second image below, which includes the proposed location of Sign #2 of 2 in the lower left-hand corner, also calls into question the need for additional signage given the massive concrete sign that is only a few feet away.



If you should have any questions or comments regarding this matter, please contact me (for historic built environment) at andrew.lewis@dc.gov or 202-442-8841 or Ruth Trocolli (for archaeology) at ruth.trocolli@dc.gov or 202-442-8836. Otherwise, thank you for providing an opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



C. Andrew Lewis
Senior Historic Preservation Specialist
State Historic Preservation Office

15-0229 through 15-0238
cc: Jennifer Hirsch, NCPCH